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ABSTRACT

This report outlines the highlights of the New York State Special Summit on Black and Hispanic Children. One hundred selected leaders from government, private industry, foundations, academia, the religious community, advocacy organizations and voluntary agencies heard presentations from national and state experts and developed recommendations for public and private initiatives on behalf of these children and their families. Chapter 1 contains the statistical data documenting the extent to which Black and Hispanic children are over-represented among the poor, the dropouts, the homeless, and the institutionalized. Chapter 2 includes excerpts from each of the keynote speakers' presentations, and information about "No Time to Lose," a video documentary produced for the summit. Chapter 3 contains the summaries of issues and recommendations developed by the participants to address the following major conference themes: (1) strengthening families and communities; (2) promoting economic self-sufficiency; (3) reversing school dropout and failure rates; (4) assuring quality health care; (5) addressing the child welfare crisis; (6) developing affordable housing and promoting neighborhood renewal; and (7) stopping the cycle of family violence. Chapter 4 contains a summary of the major recommendations. Numerous photographs and three tables of statistical data are included. A list of 47 references is appended to Chapter 1. (FMW)

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NO TIME TO LOSE

"To build the future, we must start where the future always starts, with children.

New York's children are in danger. They are threatened by poverty, inadequate education, even terrible physical and mental abuse. Their problems demand nothing less than a bold and broad commitment of government at all levels, in partnership with the whole Family of New York.

Not just this year, not just next year: we must make the next ten years, The Decade of the Child."

—Governor Mario M. Cuomo
State of the State Message, January 6, 1988

Dedication

To the children of New York State.
They are our hope, and we are theirs.
There is . . . no time to lose.

5-19-89

Message from Social Services COMMISSIONER CESAR A. PERALES

On November 8-10, 1987, Mario M. Cuomo and I convened a New York State Summit on Black and Hispanic Children at the Tarrytown Executive House Conference Center, 30 miles north of New York City. We invited 100 selected leaders from government, private industry, foundations, academia, the religious community, advocacy organizations and voluntary agencies to join with us to hear presentations by national and state experts and to develop recommendations for public and private sector initiatives on behalf of these children and their families.

This Special Report is designed to provide the reader with the program highlights of the Summit, and to encourage the development of strategies at the local, state and national level to address the needs of Black and Hispanic children who are living in the inner cities.

Chapter 1 contains the data which was developed for Summit participants to document the extent to which Black and Hispanic children are over-represented among the poor, the drop-outs, the homeless and the institutionalized. Chapter 2 includes excerpts from each of the keynote speakers' presentations, and information about "No Time to Lose," the video documentary which we produced for the Summit. Chapter 3 contains the summaries of issues and recommendations which were developed by Summit participants to address the major themes of the conference:

- Strengthening Families and Communities
- Promoting Economic Self-Sufficiency
- Reversing School Drop Out and Failure Rates
- Assuring Quality Health Care
- Addressing the Child Welfare Crisis
- Developing Affordable Housing and Promoting Neighborhood Renewal
- Stopping the Cycle of Family Violence

Finally, Chapter 4 contains a summary of the major recommendations.

"This Special Report is designed to provide the reader with the program highlights of the Summit..."

We are very grateful to the individuals who gave their valuable time to participate in the Summit on Black and Hispanic Children. We are deeply indebted to Dr. William Julius Wilson, Congressmen Charles Rangel and Robert Garcia, and to all of the national and state experts who took part in our reaction panels or served as discussion leaders for the Summit work groups. I would especially like to express my gratitude to the foundations who generously supported this important effort: the Foundation for Child Development; the New York Community Trust, the Edna Mc Connell Clark Foundation, the Edwin Gould Foundation for Children, the Greater New York Fund, the Fund for the City of New York, the William T. Grant Foundation, the NYS Junior League and the Mailman Foundation.

Cesar A Perales

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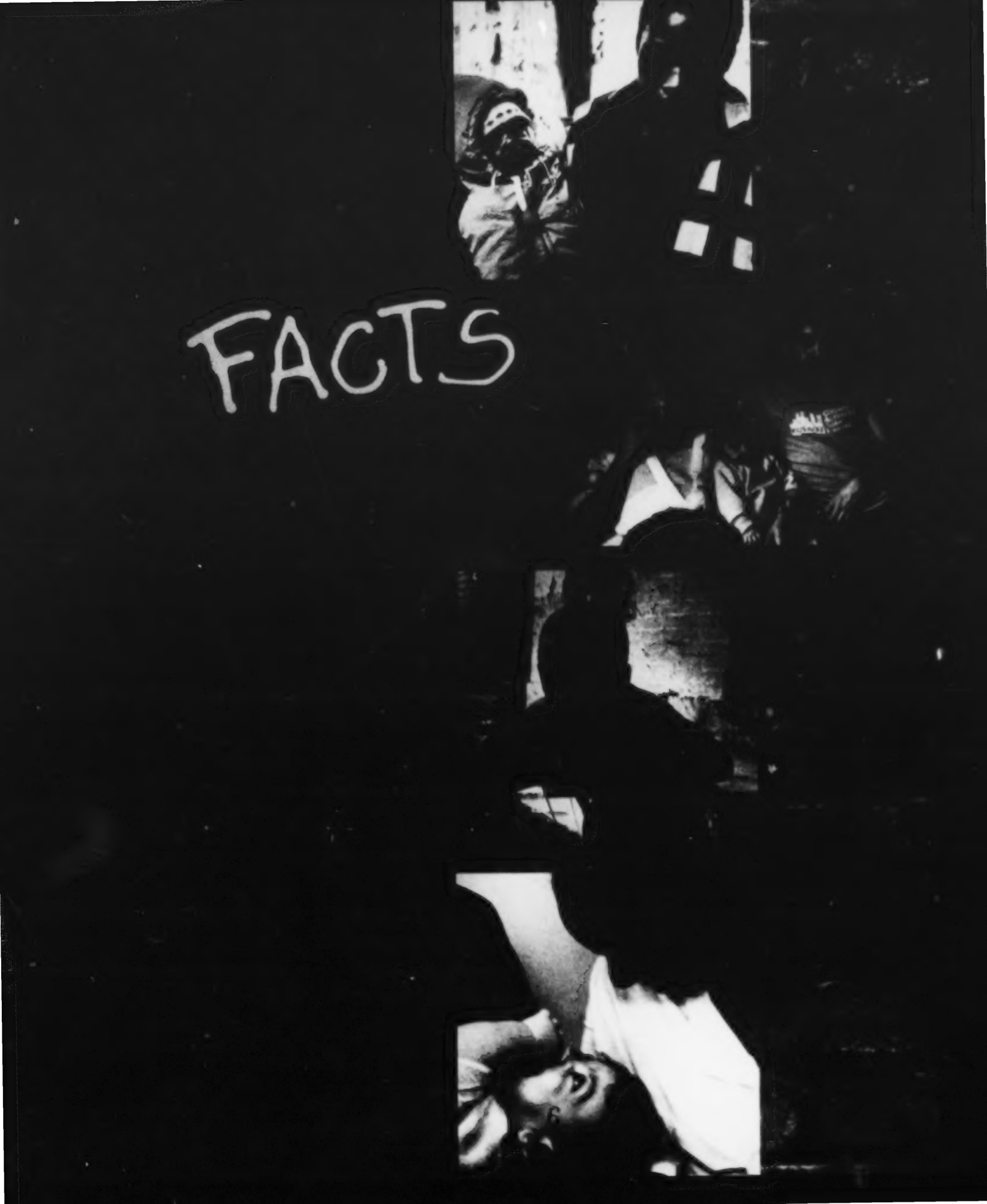

FACTS

POPULATIO

There were 5.2 million children under age 21 living in New York State in 1985.[1]

- More than 3.3 million of these children were white; 884,000 were Black; 780,000 were Hispanic; and 156,000 were of other races or ethnic origins.[2]
- While only 40% of the State's children lived in New York City, 71% of the Black children and 84% of the Hispanic children lived there.[3]

Children comprise a decreasing share of the State's population.

- In 1970, children comprised 37% of the State's population. By 1985 they comprised only 29% of the State's population, and this share is expected to decline to 27% by 1990.[4]
- Between 1970 and 1985, there was a 23% decline in the number of children in New York State, compared to an 8% decline in the number of children in the nation as a whole.[5]

An increasing share of the State's children are Black or Hispanic.

- In 1970, one in four New York children was Black or Hispanic; by 1984, one in three was a member of these groups.[6]
- In New York City, the share of children who were Black or Hispanic grew from almost one in two to almost two in three over this same period.[6]

Black and Hispanic children are disproportionately likely to be living in New York City.

- In 1980, 70% of Black children and 84% of Hispanic children lived in New York City, compared to 20% of white children.[7]
- The concentration of Black and Hispanic children in New York City is declining somewhat. In 1970, 75% of Black children and 90% of Hispanic children lived in New York City.

26% of white children lived in New York City at that time.[7]

Many of New York State's children were born outside the continental U.S.

- In 1980, 7% of the children living in New York State, and 14% of the children living in New York City, were born outside the fifty states.[8]
- In 1980, 3% of the children in New York City were born in Puerto Rico; 4% in the Caribbean; and 2% in Central or South America.[8]
- In 1980, more than one in five youths between the ages of 15 and 19 was born outside the fifty states, and more than half of these entered the City after the age of school entry.[9]
- These statistics underestimate the number of foreign-born children in the State, because published data undercount illegal aliens and their children.[9]

The likelihood of living with two parents is much lower for Black or Hispanic children than for white children.

- In 1980, half of all Black children in New York State and 42% of Hispanic children lived with a single parent, compared to 13% of white children.[10]
- In 1980, more than 90% of children who lived with a single parent lived with their mother.[11]
- An increasing share of Black and Hispanic children are living with mothers who never married. By 1980, 38% of Black children and 28% of Hispanic children lived with mothers who never married. Among whites, the comparable figure was 8%.[12]

Black and Hispanic children are being raised by parents who are younger and have less education than the parents of their white peers.

- In 1980, about 45% of Black and Hispanic children in New York State lived with a parent or other household head who was less than 35 years old, compared to 33% of white children.[13]
- In 1980, 61% of Hispanic children and 41% of Black children lived in a household headed by a parent or other adult with less than a high school degree, compared to 21% of white children.[14]

A large share of New York's children have parents born outside the continental U.S.

- In 1980, 24% of the children in New York State and 45% of the children in New York City lived with at least one parent born outside the continental United States.[15]
- In 1980, 79% of the Hispanic children lived with at least one parent born outside the continental United States. Two-thirds of these children had at least one parent from Puerto Rico.[16]

POVERTY

Black and Hispanic children in New York State are four times as likely to be poor as are white children.

- The poverty level for a household of three in 1984 was $8,277, for a family of four it was $10,609.[13]
- Between 1980 and 1984, the poverty rate for all children less than 19 years old in New York State increased. By 1984, 1 in 4 children under 19 years of age lived in a household with income below the poverty level.[14]
- In 1984, 4 in 10 Black children and more than 5 in 10 Hispanic children lived in poor households, compared to just over 1 in 10 white children.[15]

Poor Black and Hispanic children in New York City live in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poor families.

- In 1980, 8 in 10 poor New York City children lived in neighborhoods where at least 20% of the residents were poor. 4 in 10 lived in neighborhoods where at least 40% of the residents were poor.[16]
- In 1980, 9 in 10 poor Black and Hispanic children in New York City lived in neighborhoods where at least 20% of the residents were poor.[16]

Poor Black and Hispanic children in New York State are less likely than poor white children to be living in a household with one or more wage earners.

- In 1984, 46% of poor children in New York State lived in a household where at least one person worked at some time during the year.[17]
- In that same year, 39% of poor Black children and 35% of poor Hispanic children lived in households where someone worked, compared to 64% of poor white children.[18]
- In 1984, about 1 in 7 poor Black and Hispanic children lived in a household where someone worked full-time, year-round, compared to 1 in 4 poor white children.[19]

Black and Hispanic children living with a single parent in New York State are much less likely to receive financial support from their absent parent than are white children.

- *24% of single Black mothers and 26% of single Hispanic mothers have court ordered child support, compared to 67% of single white mothers.[17]*
- *Of those with a court order, 51% of single Black and 40% of single Hispanic mothers compared to two-thirds of single white mothers received the child support due them.[18]*

Black and Hispanic youth in New York State are more likely to live in households that are dependent on public assistance for income than are white youth.

- *In 1984, 69% of poor Black youth and 62% of poor Hispanic youth lived in households where someone received public assistance, compared to 46% of poor white youth.[19]*
- *In New York State in 1979, public assistance accounted for 58% of the income in Hispanic single-parent households, 35% of the income in Black single-parent households and 16% of the income in white single-parent households.[20]*

HOMELESS

Each day New York State provides emergency housing to an estimated 6,700 families with 13,500 children.[26]

- Nearly 80% of these homeless families are sheltered by New York City.[26]
- Approximately 95% of the homeless families in New York City are Black or Hispanic.[26]

Black and Hispanic students are more likely to attend public schools than are white students.

- Of the 3.1 million New York youth in school in 1985-86, 83% were attending public schools.[27]
- During the same academic year, only two-thirds of New York City's school children attended public schools.[28]
- In 1985-86, 86% of Black and 82% of Hispanic school children in New York City attended public schools, compared to only 52% of white school children.[29]
- Nearly three in four public school students in New York City in 1985-86 were Black (38%) or Hispanic (34%).[30]

Black and Hispanic youth in New York State are much less likely to complete high school than are white youth.

- Among Black students who entered ninth grade in fall 1981, 54% failed to graduate with their class in 1985.[31]
- Among Hispanic students who entered ninth grade in the same year, 60% failed to graduate with their class in 1985.[31]
- In contrast, 79% of the same cohort of white youth graduated with their class in 1985.[31]

In New York State, Non-white youth between 16 and 19 years old are less likely than white youth of the same age to be in the labor force.

- In 1985, only 25% of Non-white youth were in the labor force (working or looking for work), compared to 46% for white youth.[32]
- Among those in the labor force, Non-white youth were much more likely to be unemployed (41% vs. 15% for white youth).[33]

CHILD HEALTH

Non-white babies born in New York State are more likely to die in infancy or have low birthweights than are white babies.

- In 1985, the infant mortality rate for Non-whites was 13.9 per thousand compared to 9.7 per thousand for whites.[34]
- Non-white infants were twice as likely to be born with low birthweight than were white infants—11.1% of Non-white births vs. 5.6% of white births.[35]

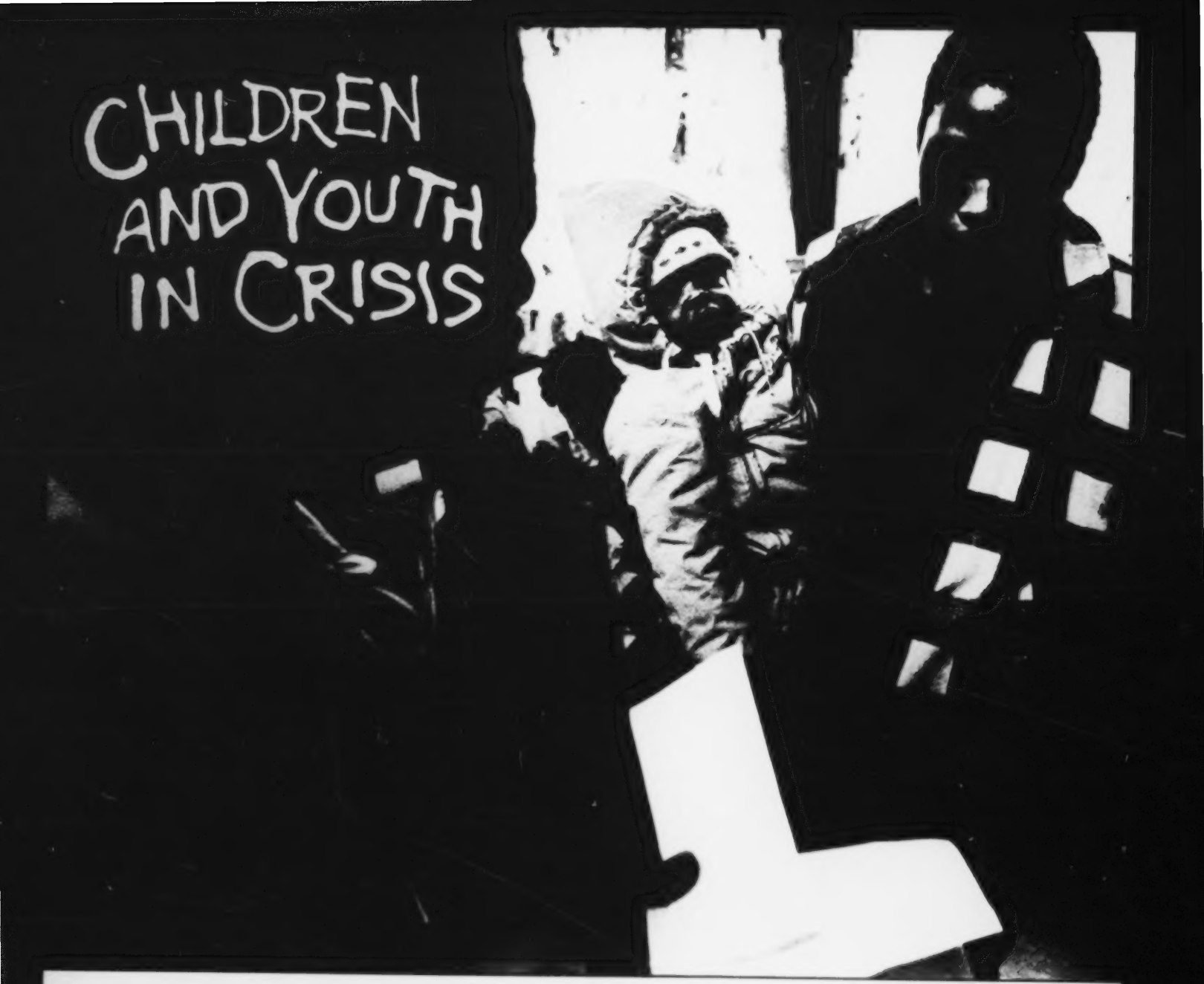
Non-white babies are twice as likely as white babies to have a teen mother.

- In 1985, one in six Non-white babies born in New York State had a mother under 20 years old. White babies were only half as likely to have a teen mother.[36]
- In 1985, 12% of the children born to Non-white teens in New York State, compared to 8% of the children born to white teens, were low birthweight babies.[37]
- 27% of Non-white teen mothers received late or no prenatal care compared to 19% of white teen mothers.[38]

Pediatric AIDS is victimizing the minority community almost exclusively.

- 226 New York children are known to have AIDS, of whom 94% are Black or Hispanic.[39]
- The majority of pediatric AIDS cases are attributed to transmission from infected mother to baby. In 82% of pediatric AIDS cases, one or both parents are IV drug users.[40]

CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CRISIS



In 1985, 21,000 children in New York State were found to be neglected or abused.

- 48% of those found to be neglected or abused were white, 33% were Black, and 15% were Hispanic.[41]
- While Black children were a sixth of the State's child population in 1985, they were a third of the confirmed neglect or abuse cases. The Hispanic share of confirmed neglect or abuse cases was almost equal to its share of the State's child population. White children were more than 60% of the State's child population, but just under 50% of the confirmed neglect and abuse cases.[42]

Most of New York State's foster children are Black or Hispanic.

- In March, 1987, 26,547 children were in foster care. Of these, nearly 16,000 were New York City children.[43]
- Just under half of the children in foster care at this time were Black; 14% were Hispanic; 29% were white; and the remainder were of other racial groups.[44]

Non-white adolescents are almost three times more likely to bear children than are white adolescents.

- In 1985, the birthrate among Non-white girls aged 10 to 19 was 42.1 (42.1 births per 1,000 Non-white girls) compared to a birthrate of 15.5 for white girls.[45]
- In 1982, 90% of Non-white teen mothers were not married at the time they gave birth, compared to 56% of white teen mothers.[46]

Black and Hispanic youth are more likely to be victims of violence than are white youth.

- Of Black youth 5 to 19 years of age who died in 1986, 3 in 10 were victims of homocide.[47]
- Of Hispanic youth 5 to 19 years of age who died in 1986, 1 in 4 were victims of homocide.[47]
- Of white youth who died in 1986, fewer than 4% were victims of homocide.[47]

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HIGH LIGHTS

Black and Hispanic Children

Excerpts from the Keynote Address of

GOVERNOR MARIO M. CUOMO

"You take any measure you want, and you find that Black and Hispanic children are at the bottom."

When we first discussed the Summit on Black and Hispanic Children, it was Matilda's and my view that there was no subject more compelling that we could focus on at this time in New York State. At this time in the history of our civilization as a great industrial nation, the population which is the most vulnerable are the children. We are confronted by the fact that the most vulnerable among the children are those who are Black and Hispanic and poor.

Poverty. Illiteracy. Dropout rates. Health. Job opportunities. You take any measure you want, and you find that Black and Hispanic children are at the bottom. They need our help.

We ought to address ourselves to these issues as a matter of compassion. We ought to do it because our impulse as people, at our very best, has always been to help people. I'm afraid that love as a motivation for action doesn't always work politically. What you have to add to love today is self-interest. You can do that very easily where Black and Hispanic children are concerned.

You can suggest self-interest to all the people who are concerned about the plummeting stock market, and where the national economy is going now that we're all tied together in a global economy. We're getting beaten up by Taiwanese who are willing to work for very low wages, and by the Japanese. You can say to them, "You are in the competitive battle of your life." Forget about love if it's too burdensome for you. But you better start concentrating on self-interest.

Who is going to be your workforce in the twenty-first century? I'll tell you. They are going to be women, the elderly, the disabled, and Blacks and Hispanics. So if you don't have time for love, you had better make time for pragmatism. And you'd better do something about the children to be sure they are ready for the competition of the twenty-first century.

There is not a state in the U.S. close to us in the extent of voluntary involvement and commitment by our private sector, especially our heavy commercial, industrial banking interest. We have a School and Business Alliance which is linking government and the private sector to place children in internship programs with the promise of a job after they graduate. The Rockefeller partnership has been working on housing and jobs programs in a very real way. But I don't believe we have tapped all of the private sector potential. We need the full weight of the business, religious and voluntary communities.

Too many kids are dropping out, and too many kids are graduating who aren't ready to work. The New York City school system, the largest school system in the United States, is a disaster, and we know it. When you look at that problem you have to feel more than sorrow for the children involved. You have to feel concern for the city, the state, the nation, and yourself.

Speaking for New York State, this is perhaps the most important thing we can do. To deal with the issues facing these children, you are going to need the Republican Senate and the Democratic Assembly; upstate rural conservatives and inner city liberals will have to come together in a bipartisan consensus which gets up over ideology and recognizes common concerns. That is the key to the future.

At the same time, we have to do a lot of things differently. I am going to be putting a lot of emphasis this year on accountability. Giving money to agencies to address social problems is not enough. We have to manage effectively and efficiently. We need managers whose hearts are in the right place who also have their heads in the right place. Talking about accountability does not mean we are retreating from commitment; that is our way of making it effective.

We have to keep our economic base as strong as possible so that when people are trained for jobs, the jobs will be there. And they won't all be jobs at the lowest level which barely gives you what you were getting on the social programs. We want real jobs, good jobs.

I'm afraid that no matter how hard we try at the state level, until you can change what is happening in Washington, there is no real hope for dramatic progress. We have put more money into homeless housing than anybody in the U.S. A few years ago we were about a million units short in this state. Now, after the state's investment of $4.4 billion, we were able to get only 190,000 new units per year. If you doubled that commitment to $8.8 billion, you'd still be over 600,000 units short. There will still be mothers with children sleeping in homeless shelters. That is not going to change until we get a change in Washington.

Washington must understand that our greatest commitment has to be children. Black and Hispanic children. Poor people. Education. Job training. Manufacturing jobs. Minimum wage increases. We have to put an end to the false shibboleths, to the game which the Reagan administration has played for nearly 8 years in Washington.

They have convinced the people of this country that we have given too much money to poor people. They have created a climate in which someone like Charles Murray could advance a theory that giving assistance to the poor actually hurts people, and makes the problems worse. They constructed images of lazy, drunken welfare cheats and discredited anything like welfare—and then thought up their own welfare for the defense industry.

AFDC for the poor families with children in this country is only 1% of the federal budget. When you talk about welfare and education programs, it's about 8% of the budget. Is it welfare that created the trillion dollar national debt?

Now, when you talk about the defense budget, that's about 30% of what they spend in Washington. If you want to increase federal support for housing, education, health care, or welfare, you have to know all about the defense budget. And you have to commit yourself to bipartisanship; the same way we do it in New York, you have to do it in Washington.

As government policy makers, we also need to limit ourselves to needs, and forget about wants, for right now. I would give you as an example Congressman Bill Gray's wonderful line. "In a choice between mass transit and education, what do you do? You say education over mass transit, as important as mass transit is. Why? Because I'd rather my kid walked to school, than rode to nowhere."

Next you get to revenues. There have to be additional revenues. In Washington they all say, "We don't believe in tax increases." That's baloney. They just don't want to be responsible for it.

A final suggestion. You can't be partisans only for your own cause. In order to deal with this you have to deal with the whole picture. It's not enough to say, "We are wasting money on defense." You have to be better equipped than that. You have to make the whole argument, become experts at the whole picture, so that we can fit our position into the picture intelligently and persuasively.

Matilda and I are absolutely committed to this cause. The cost of not helping these children is immense. We will work very, very hard with you. We will study the recommendations you produce at the Summit. We will work with the Legislature. This State is right on the issues. We're not perfect, but we're right. And to the extent that we can influence the national agenda, we will do that, too.

"I don't believe we have tapped all of the private sector potential. We need the full weight of the business, religious and voluntary communities."

Excerpts from the Keynote Address of
DR. WILLIAM JULIUS WILSON

"The social and economic gap between the growth of major U.S. cities as a whole, and the inner city communities within their boundaries, is widening to the point where the ghetto...is now incapable of providing basic services, resources and life chances."

By 1985 nearly three quarters of the nation's poor were metropolitan residents. Although U.S. cities experienced an overall decline in total population between 1970 and 1980, the absolute number of city residents living in poverty increased by 19%, due to the growth in the number of poor Blacks (up 24%) and poor Hispanics (up 73%).

The poverty rate for whites in the inner cities remained around 10% between 1970 and 1980, while it increased from 25 to 29% among Blacks, and from 23 to 29% among Hispanics. Increased poverty in the inner cities went hand in hand with higher percentages of families receiving public assistance, up from 8.4% in 1970 to 15% in 1980. (7.9% among whites; 27.3% among Blacks; and 22.9% among Hispanics.)

In extreme poverty areas of central cities, (census tracts in which the poverty rate exceeds 40%), the proportion of families receiving public assistance jumped from 34.3% in 1970 to 45% in 1980. Less than 1.7% of all non-Hispanic whites lived in these extreme poverty areas of the major U.S. cities, as compared to 16.5% of all Hispanics and 21% of all Blacks. Most poor Blacks and Hispanics lived in high to extreme poverty areas in 1980 (62% and 53% respectively). Poor non-Hispanic whites rarely resided in such areas (14.1%).

Statistical studies document a marked increase in inner-city poverty despite a net loss of population; an even sharper increase in the population living in high and extreme poverty areas; an increasing concentration over time of the poor in the poorest sections of the inner cities; and sharply divergent patterns of concentration between whites and minorities. The social and economic gap between the growth of major U.S. cities as a whole, and the inner city communities within their boundaries, is widening to the point where the ghetto, which had once duplicated the structure and activities of the larger society, is now incapable of providing basic services, resources and life chances. Disadvantage and deterioration are accumulating in those neighborhoods which are least able to adapt to further losses; and the decline of the inner cities after 1970 accelerated in a self-feeding manner.

The urban economy of the 1970's and 1980's is a major factor in the social transformation of the predominantly minority, inner-cities. The severe loss of blue collar jobs (in which 42% of employed Black men and 37% of employed Hispanic men worked in 1970); the expansion of jobs in white collar service industries in which minorities are the least represented; the relocation of jobs to suburban areas, often inaccessible by public transportation; the increased participation of women in the workforce and the coming of age of the baby boom cohort all contributed to the structural unemployment and underemployment of Blacks and Hispanics, as did federal policy makers who allowed unemployment to rise in an effort to reduce inflation.

These economic phenomena factor into the increasing polarization of income between Black professionals and blue collar employees. They contribute to the increasing numbers of female headed households, especially Black heads of households, who are living in poverty and to the end of restrictions which allowed for the exodus of middle class and working class families from the ghettos to other parts of the city and to the suburbs. These were the social buffers who provided stability in ghetto communities by reinforcing societal norms and values and making it possible to envision upward mobility.

Now the ghetto represents, almost exclusively, the most disadvantaged segments of the urban Black population—including families that have experienced long-term spells of poverty and/or welfare dependency; individuals who lack training and skills and have gone through periods of recurrent or persistent unemployment; people who have dropped out of the labor force altogether, and those who are involved in the underground economy or resort to street crime as a means of survival.

In such neighborhoods the net effect is that joblessness is viewed as a way of life; the relationship between schooling and post-schooling employment takes on a different meaning, and the development of skills necessary for the world of work in the mainstream economy is adversely affected. Teachers become frustrated and do not teach, and children do not learn. A vicious cycle is perpetuated through the family, through the community and through the schools.

I use the "ghetto underclass" to suggest that a fundamental social transformation has taken place in ghetto neighborhoods, that residents of the inner city today find themselves in a qualitatively different social and institutional environment where the structure of social relations makes it increasingly unlikely that they will have access to those resources and channels necessary for escaping poverty.

In neighborhoods that include working class and middle class families, youngsters will observe many individuals regularly going to and from work; they may sense an increase in school drop out rates, but they can also see a connection between school and meaningful employment.

This analysis leads me to believe that the accelerating social dislocations that plague large inner cities in this country are due to profound, long term structural changes in the social and economic organization which have altered the social fabric of poor communities. Until these ramifying and changing relations between economic organization, industrial mix, class structure and poverty concentration in the inner city are fully explored, policy strategies designed to address ghetto social dislocations may provide a quick fix, ease social tensions and please political constituencies, but they will fall far short of enhancing the lives of the nation's truly disadvantaged.

"...policy strategies designed to address ghetto social dislocations may provide a quick fix... but they will fall far short of enhancing the lives of the nation's truly disadvantaged."

Excerpt from the Keynote Address of

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSIONER CESAR A. PERALES

In economic terms, New York State has done extremely well during the last five years. Most of us are doing better. Unfortunately, many New Yorkers, especially children, are not.

I am pleased by the progress made during my tenure as Commissioner of the Department of Social Services in New York State. We have put into place service centers across the state which provide remedial education, vocational training and on-site child care for parents with children under the age of six—a group most at risk of long-term welfare dependency. We have developed networks of community programs to prevent teenage pregnancy and to provide supports to adolescent parents. We have also established case management services for teenage parents who are receiving public assistance to ensure that they will complete their education and enter the job market equipped with skills that will enable them to leave the welfare rolls.

Although thousands of welfare recipients have benefitted from improved economic conditions and job training programs, we know that many thousands of children in public assistance households have been negatively impacted by the worsening conditions in the inner-cities of New York State. Their everyday struggles go beyond living with poverty to include the disintegration of community life, the breakdown of social supports and increasing threats of street violence and homelessness. Their early life experiences have given them an entirely different understanding of what the world is all about. They are living in a world that is invisible to most people, a parallel world that exists along with ours, from which many see no possible escape.

Our keynote speaker at the summit, Professor William Julius Wilson of the University of Chicago, poignantly described the economic and political conditions which have created these neighborhoods—neighborhoods unlike anything we have known before. The children have less exposure to a value system which teaches that adult success is directly related to discipline, hard work and acting responsibly. They are exposed to few positive role models because those who aspired, those who survived, have moved up—and out of the neighborhoods.

We developed a videotape documentary for the Summit on Black and Hispanic children in which children describe their living situations, hopes and fears for their families, and their feelings about the world around them. What do they see in their world? Welfare. Widespread unemployment. Drug abuse. Profound family stress. Fear of being taken away from their families. Inadequate education. Substandard housing. Epidemic crime and violence.

Think back for a moment to your own childhood. How often did you hear the sound of gunshots? Was it common to see your neighbors jumping out of windows to escape flames? And while many of us had nightmares, not many of us have worried that our mothers would be murdered before our eyes, shot three times in the head. And lest we believe these conditions affect only a few children in only a few neighborhoods in New York State, the fact is that 9 out of 10 Black and Hispanic children in New York City live in concentrated poverty areas.

Despite all of our efforts, and I am proud of our achievements, I am nevertheless con-

cerned that there are thousands of children, and a disproportionate number of Black and Hispanic children, whose circumstances have become much worse since the federal cutbacks of 1981.

The plight of these children must be our greatest national concern. We must provide the impetus for change, the catalyst for reform. By the year 2000, the number of young adults potentially entering the labor force will decline by more than 20%. Minorities, Blacks and Hispanics, will comprise an increasingly large percentage of this labor pool. We need policies to build an overall first-class labor force by helping these youngsters, especially inner-city youngsters, overcome deficiencies in education and skills so they will be equipped to move into the labor force. An effective educational system, sensitive to the needs of these youngsters, is a critical component of any plan to improve their life chances.

Providing the means for these youngsters to enter the economic mainstream is both morally right and economically sound. But education by itself will not be enough. Can we expect the schools to excite the mind of a child who spent the night listening to the sounds of sirens, rats, screams and gun shots? How does a sick or hungry child concentrate? Reforms are needed in all public institutions supporting these children. Leadership is also required from the private sector to ensure that Blacks and Hispanics have real access to jobs which provide more than minimum wage, and to positions which offer not only advancement opportunities, but the opportunity to become part of the management/policy-making team.

Energizing these institutions will be a tremendous undertaking. There are no miracle cures for the grim social problems facing these communities, but inaction offers no cure at all. Those of us who think we can continue to ignore the increasing numbers of poor children are wrong. Because of their sheer numbers, they will intrude on our futures. As they mature, they will comprise a larger percentage of the labor pool; and their absence from the larger society will affect us all.

I ask you to respond to these children, not out of fear nor self-interest, but out of a sense of justice and a sense of love.

"Providing the means for these youngsters to enter the economic mainstream is both morally right and economically sound. But education by itself will not be enough."

Excerpts from the Keynote Speech by

CONGRESSMAN CHARLES B. RANGEL

"In the inner cities...there is a time bomb that's going to explode... This is not a problem that's going to be dealt with by social service workers or local elected officials. This is a problem that has to be dealt with by every one of us."

You know that you're not going to tackle all the problems facing Black and Hispanic children on one weekend. We have outstanding thinkers here—Kenneth Clark, Bill Wilson, Andrew Billingsley, Jim Dumpson. Academics with national and international reputations. Powerful legislators. People in city and state governments who are prepared to put their reputations on the line. We have got to hold each others' hands and we have to come together again.

We see now that a time bomb is rolling down the streets. And some people have come together in Tarrytown, New York, to find solutions, to find out how many good people we can get together, and to see whether we can get a handle on it. And if we can, what kind of resources we will need, and when.

I came out of Harlem, dropped out of high school, and I came on and really succeeded in one of the most august legislative bodies in the world, the U.S. Congress. But I came out of Harlem when everyone was poor. You weren't embarrassed to go to the armory for surplus goods. Everyone didn't have a father. But those who did, shared. I had an uncle who worked in the State Building as an elevator operator and lived in the Riverton. I would say, "I have someone who lives in the Riverton." We each shared the little bit that we had.

But racism and segregation meant what? Everybody had somebody in their community that we were proud of. Now that Dr. King and others made it possible for Puerto Ricans and Blacks to shatter the boundaries of segregation, to leave the community, to assimilate, to go to the suburbs and New Jersey or Connecticut, the question we are asking now is: Did they pull the light out when they left? Is there anyone concerned about what is left? And whatever is left, will this be the generation that would break the chain of upward mobility that this country has traditionally enjoyed for over two hundred years?

There is nobody here that doesn't truly believe that their parents had a harder time than they did. And no one who doesn't believe that their parents before them made it easier for that group. No one in my community back then recognized how important it was to us that we knew someone who had a diamond ring, someone who was a lawyer, or an elevator operator in the Criminal Court Building that took up judges and district attorneys at 107th Street. But this was exposure that all of us had.

And so, if you reflect that our generation has the responsibility to leave some kind of legacy, what are we in Tarrytown going to say that we left as a legacy? What is history going to record that we have done? Do we have the guts to review what we are leaving behind?

I thought that when I went to Congress, if I could just start talking about the bomb that is exploding, I would just deal with that. To deal with the question of hundreds of tons of drugs coming across the border, into our streets, affecting our youth, creating AIDS, creating crime. But you can't just take one part of the problem that you would like to deal with.

We want to talk about prevention, about dealing with the problem before it's created. Perhaps we have to get all professionals, all members of the community, involved in this. We have to be able to call upon the Congress and make certain they provide the funds, the oversight, to see that we just don't have abandoned kids, that we reunite families, that we have the know-how to get people training and jobs so that they don't have to become dependent on AFDC. Then we have to make certain that they have salaries and are able to pay rents, and that they're not victims being

held hostage in these welfare hotels.

As we watch and see what is happening around the inner cities all around this country, we see that there is a time bomb that's going to explode. If you ever want to talk about national security, this is the time to focus on it. This is not a problem that's going to be dealt with by social service workers or local elected officials. This is a problem that has to be dealt with by everyone of us.

As Dorothy Height has said, "Isn't it time that, as a people, we say that Black and Puerto Rican kids, no matter how they got here, are ours?" So that if anyone wants to check out, and go to Connecticut or New Jersey, let 'em go! But you're not going to leave this world without saying that all these Black kids and all these Puerto Rican kids belong to us. We need to be able to say we have tried, that we have extended a hand to this next generation.

That's a moral argument. But I come from Washington, D.C. where they have gone on automatic pilot to cut back on domestic and defense spending in order to reduce the national deficit. For those of you my age and older, you remember this whole wave of government providing assistance is something that started with Franklin D. Roosevelt. Where would Black folks be without the GI Bill and the grants and assistance which enabled us to do many of the things we needed to do? Yet this administration said they would reduce taxes by $850 billion, reduce domestic spending by $200 billion, and then they moved into a national defense program that cost trillions of dollars in order to have debt for your children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Another question we have to ask ourselves is how are we going to compete with Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Japanese? Who are we going to compete with? Some of the kids who come to my office looking for a job have no experience about what is involved in holding a job. Take a look at the school system. See what we're putting in, and what's coming out. You'll see that 75% of the students look like they're Black and Puerto Rican, and then, at the end of high school, less than half of them will have a diploma. So where do they go, and where is the support system for American industry?

Are we holding back on taxing people in New York City because we want them here? But who of us here will be able to be a part of that system? I say it looks like national security, but it also looks like economic development. It looks not just like common sense, but it looks like dollars and cents, too. If cities, states and federal governments are not prepared to tax in order to do what needs to be done, who can do it? It can only happen if the people who are paying the taxes believe they are getting a return from the payment of the taxes.

If someone had the sophistication to tell people what their taxes are paying for, to let people know that it costs between $25,000 and $30,000 a year to institutionalize a child and that we are paying from $25,000 to $50,000 to $100,000 to keep families in slums and welfare hotels, do you think people would be satisfied to know we are investing close to a million dollars in a kid, from birth to death, just containing the problem?

I suspect that we have enough computers in this room to tell the taxpayers how much we can save them if we can keep kids in school, and provide services to families. This argument is self-serving. The private sector is losing its labor market. They need kids that can read and write, kids that have a college education.

If you can convince the government that it's national security, I think you can get their attention. I know the governor will be prepared to participate. And if we organize politically, the mayor will pay attention. Perhaps the most powerful element that we need to get involved is our spiritual leaders. When the religious powers call on the political candidates, I never hear anything about poor folks and kids being on their agenda. Nothing about what you are meeting about here in Tarrytown. What could be more political than the religious teaching that each of us has the responsibility to take care of the least among us? And who could be lesser among us than a kid being born addicted to drugs, not knowing whether or not they will survive?

And what about the Association for a Better New York? The Economic Roundtable? David Rockefeller? Why can't we get together and say that we're prepared to give you a labor market so you don't have to leave New York?

We need to work with labor leaders, with political organizations and with our social scientists to say, you can't tackle this thing by looking at just one part of it. One salary, one increase in tenure. The only way we can do it is say that we want to save the nation, the city and the state. And that we have to have that political power where city council people and mayors, state legislators and governors and members of Congress would know that when we say it is going to cost to turn things around in the inner city, we're talking about an investment in our national security.

I'm convinced that this is an historic meeting because of the talent that's in this audience, and because of your awesome power in making certain that, in the next meeting, anybody you want at the table cannot afford not to be there.

"We need to work with labor leaders, with political organizations and with our social scientists to say, 'you can't tackle this thing by looking at just one part of it.'... The only way we can do it is say that we want to save the nation, the city and the state... We're talking about an investment in our national security."

About the Video:

NO TIME TO LOSE

Produced and Directed by
PATRICIA BENOIT
and
ALLAN SIEGEL
in association with
Camera News, Inc.

The videotape is an introduction to the children whose lives are often hidden by statistics and studies. It documents the everyday realities for many of New York's Black and Hispanic youth, as seen through their own eyes. The documentary reflects the children's potential, creativity, intelligence, and sensitivity which may be lost, not only to them, but to society as a whole if we fail to act in their behalf.

Patricia Benoit has been a theatrical director and assistant director in New York and Haiti. She studied directing at the Yale Drama School. She has worked as a producer, director and casting director for independent film and video and for Italian television.

Allan Siegel was one of the co-founders of the NEWSREEL documentary collective, and has produced, directed and edited numerous documentaries and short subjects which have been shown on public television and at international film festivals.

Duration: 27 minutes

Copies of the video may be purchased from the NYS Department of Social Services for $19.95 each. Please direct your inquiries to DSS, "No Time to Lose," 40 North Pearl Street, Albany, New York 12243.

Executive Producers:
Jeffrey Carples,
Alexandria Douglas,
Linda Fisher,
Barbara J. Sabol
and
Joseph Semidei

YOUTH PERSPECTIVES AT THE SUMMIT

"I want to get away...because there's nothing here. But I can't leave my mother because she needs me to take care of my little brother...and to take care of the house if she's sick."

We were fortunate to have the advice and participation of three young people at the Summit. Ms. Meredith Carey, Mr. Santos Hernandez, and Ms. Yveline Sylvain introduced each of the featured speakers at the Summit, developed a position paper on the educational needs of youth and participated in the work group on Reversing School Drop Out and Failure Rates. The following is a synopsis of their recommendations:

- Improve the quality of public school teaching
- Evaluate teachers on a regular basis
- Improve the physical plant and general attractiveness of school grounds
- Ensure the availability of counseling and other support services on a full-time basis to help students with family problems or personal needs
- Post flyers or other informational materials about services and activities for teenagers on the central walls of the school
- Provide opportunities for students to have input into the curriculum

Several children shared their personal stories with us in the video documentary produced for the Summit. Here is some of what they told us:

"I want to live in a quiet neighborhood with no drugs; no fighting every night; no shooting every week."

"I want to live in the projects because there are no rats there and nothing to hurt you."

"I don't like it that we're on welfare, but there's no other choice."

"I don't want everybody at school to find out that I was in a home because they'd make fun of me and say I was a bum."

"I think I can help my little brother by telling him to follow the things I do good because if he follows the things I do good, he'll be good...and I don't want him to be bad."

"My best dream is that we win the lottery and move out of here."

"I liked living in Jamaica (Queens) because I knew everybody over there: my relatives, my neighbors. My mother hopes that when I grow up I won't have to live in a hotel...that I'll live somewhere decent and nice."

"I want all the drug people out of the neighborhood, and I would change up all the buildings."

"I make a wish that we all live in peace. And my second wish is that I catch the biggest fish in this lake."

Excerpts from the Closing Remarks of DR. ANDREW BILLINGSLEY

I do want to say that I think this has been an outstanding conference, in part because it was well funded and well planned, and the plan brought together elements that seemed to be very effective together. You had the policy-makers and senior level managers, private sector and private foundation people, religious leaders and professional practitioners, and a handful of outside scholars just to add to the yeast. And so these three days strike me as having been very productive and fruitful. And I am personally looking forward to the ongoing unfolding of this effort in terms of the report and the work with Governor Cuomo and the legislature and so on.

I would like to summarize the six major impressions which emanated from our work together at the New York State Summit on Black and Hispanic Children.

First, we have reaffirmed in a marvelous way our proposition that the family, in all of its variety and complexity, is still the centerpiece of our civilization, our culture and our communities; and it is still the best place for rearing our children. We have reminded ourselves with brilliant analyses of data and experiences, represented especially by the video and by Dr. Wilson's presentation, that families are under attack from changing technology, changing values, from an intensification of the excessive individualism of society and from the faltering economy and social structure. Things are falling apart, and when things fall apart, the family suffers. Despite that, we are all persuaded that families are still strong, and if we can find ways of helping society to embrace them, they will be stronger still, and can provide stronger resources for the development of the children.

Second, we have reaffirmed our belief that values—family values—are still alive among our people, and it's a matter of assessing them, appreciating them, learning them, and helping to develop them. We know from the work of sociologists like Robert Merton that people cannot implement their values all by themselves. They have to wrestle with their society, with the structure of society; and they need support, understanding, and opportunity to lead themselves and manage their affairs. But the values are there. People believe in families; when one breaks up, they form another one. A lot of different kinds of families, but the values of family are strong.

Thirdly, we have reaffirmed, again with an amazing array of data, that in our society, and in this state, Black and Hispanic families suffer more than people in more privileged sectors of our society. And because they suffer more, they need more from their society, and from us, in order to help themselves.

Fourth, we believe that the strengthening of Black and Hispanic families must be done on the basis of their values, their history, their culture, their needs, their situation—and not expect them to be strengthened on the road to some other values, or some other goals. There must be focus on these families in the context of their interaction with their society.

Fifth, I think we have gotten a great deal of insight these few days on the need for collaboration. I was pleased to know that not only people from the Department of Social Services, but other related departments were also invited, because you cannot do it by one department, or one system or one subsystem. You need collaboration and coordination.

I was very encouraged by yesterday's platform presentations by people from different systems in the public sector. In addition to that, you have the cooperation from the private sector and from the voluntary sector. I have referred to a pamphlet put out by John Hope Franklin and Eleanor Holmes Norton and thirty other Black scholars in which they said there is a need for community-based initiatives and for public policies emanating from the government at all levels. That's not a matter of whether you need the government, or whether the people can do it for themselves; both are necessary.

There's a public sector at all these levels. There's a private sector, the profit-making sector. And then, there's a voluntary sector, which involves a lot of us. And the reform we seek cannot be done without strong community-based, culturally sensitive institutions. The reform we seek cannot be done by individuals, or even by families, but institutions must be strong in the community in order for people to have a future.

Then, finally, we must reaffirm our faith, our faith in our calling, in society, even our faith in our national government, and our faith in the Black and Hispanic families and children that we seek to serve. They can learn; they can grow; they can conquer; they can be strong. The belief that our children can do all sorts of things must guide us as we reaffirm our faith in life itself.

Thank you for inviting me to join you.

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

ISSUES

Black and Hispanic children are now a substantial proportion of the children of New York State, together accounting for roughly a third of the 5.2 million children in the state in 1985, up from a fourth in 1970. Most Black and Hispanic children live with their parents on any given day. Families, neighborhoods and community-based institutions are the primary vehicles for support and nurturance of Black and Hispanic children.

- In American society, family income is one of the more reliable indices of the level of well being. It signifies the extent to which families are able to meet the basic needs of their members and the standards established by the larger society. Low wages and unemployment of Black and Hispanic men have contributed to poverty, welfare dependency and the rise of female headed-families in the Black and Hispanic communities.

- The delivery of services to families is typically triggered by the endangerment of a child; adults cannot get services just because they need supportive services. Program funding is usually developed in response to some dysfunction, rather than as a pro-active strategy to develop the capacity of communities to avoid family dysfunction by offering family supports, such as pre-school programs, mentoring and role models for youth, or leadership development opportunities for children and adults.

- Public education and social services agencies are not being held accountable for results. There is little evaluation of publicly funded programs, and there is often no integration of policy development across service systems or between the state and local governments.

Content Expert:
Dr. Andrew Billingsley

Discussion Leader:
Joseph Semidei

• In a state supervised, locally run service system, because of the traditional practice of "home rule", the locality can exercise considerable latitude in its interpretation and implementation of state laws, regulations and policies.

• Blacks and Hispanics rarely own the economic instruments in the communities in which they live. There are some minority community-based institutions, but their impact is limited by their lack of resources, both political and economic.

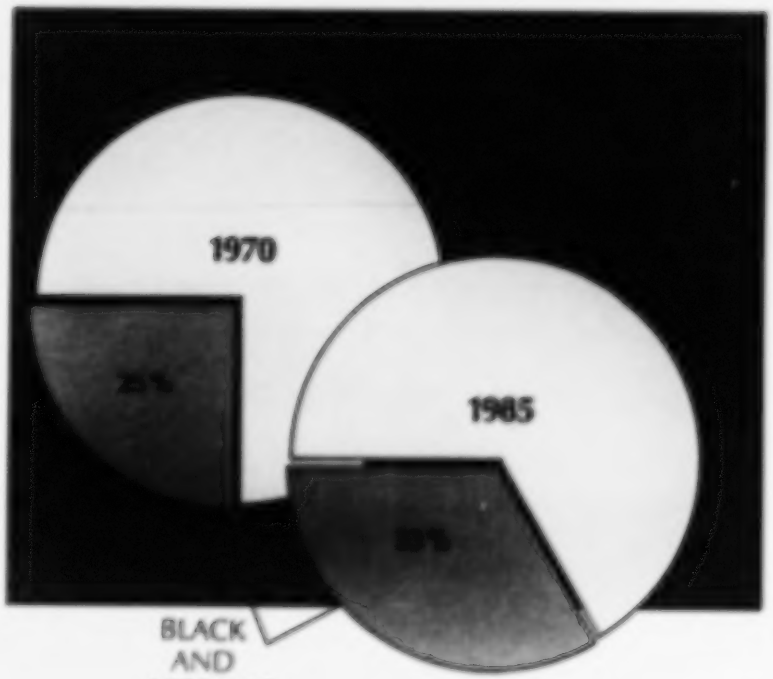
• There are too few Black and Hispanic role models in public schools and in many of the service agencies which serve children and families in the minority community. With the movement of many middle and working class families out of the inner city, access to positive adult role models who could mentor other adults as well as young people—and provide links to training and employment opportunities—is limited.

• Both the public sector and the private sector have failed to aggressively enforce affirmative action and minority contract compliance guidelines.

• Governmental efforts to reduce the fragmentation of services in high need communities by promoting coordinated public/private service delivery systems at the community level have been minimal—with the exception of Governor Cuomo's adolescent pregnancy prevention initiative. That effort is also distinguished by its concerted attempt to provide technical assistance to community-based organizations to strengthen their administrative and programmatic capabilities.

• The current welfare system does not tie benefit levels to cost of living increases; nor provide health care benefits to poor working families who lack health insurance. Many critics of the welfare system charge that present policies are geared to breaking up families, instead of helping families to stay together, and that they often thwart the efforts of low-income families to be self-sufficient.

• Because social and economic problems are concentrated in certain neighborhoods, it may be necessary to focus program strategies in high need urban communities, rather than develop broad statewide approaches.



BLACK AND HISPANIC CHILDREN

Strengthening Families and Communities

RECOMMENDATIONS

Public and private sector leaders in the State of New York must take aggressive action to prevent the further deterioration of Black and Hispanic neighborhoods and communities.

- New York should make a 10 year commitment to the development and restoration of neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty. This effort should include a commitment to strengthening the formal and informal support structures within communities where the needs are the greatest, in addition to the development of jobs and construction or renovation of low and moderate income housing.

- New York should establish open eligibility for family support services programs in high need communities. These programs would provide early intervention and support services before the child welfare system, or other catastrophic services, must be drawn in to respond to family crises.

- Public/private partnerships must be formed to ensure the investment of resources, including technical assistance, to assist families and community-based institutions in high need communities to address their own service needs.

- Blacks and Hispanics who have moved out of inner city neighborhoods must make a commitment to "give back something" to that community, by providing mentorship to youth and other adults, technical assistance to the institutions which now comprise the infrastructure of those neighborhoods, and by extending the benefits of their social and professional networks to others who have not left that community.

- Encourage public/private support for the development of youth service corps in the high need communities of New York State to promote leadership and create opportunities for adolescents in low-income neighborhoods to experience success.

- Encourage public/private collaboration to develop a guaranteed jobs program for 18-21 year olds in the target communities.

• Promote entrepreneurship, especially small business ownership, in the Black and Hispanic communities. Strengthen current public and private sector efforts to build the capacity of minority community based organizations. Develop strategies to streamline cumbersome grant application and contracts procedures, to minimize the impact of increasing match requirements for grant programs and to improve the provision of technical assistance.

• Involve private sector leaders in the development of employment, housing and education strategies to benefit the high need communities of New York State.

• In order to fully and effectively implement progressive state policies to strengthen families and communities, New York State must devise mechanisms, including more stringent controls as well as more incentive-based strategies, to ensure compliance with state policies by localities.

PROMOTING ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Content Expert
Dr. Robert B. Hill

Discussion Leader
William Johnson

ISSUES

Although the unemployment rate for all workers in New York State fell to 4.5% in September 1987, the lowest monthly unemployment rate in 17 years, unemployment rates for Black and Hispanic breadwinners continue to be twice (11.2% and 13.2% respectively) those of white workers (5.9%).

• Almost half of New York State's Black families (48%) and two-fifths of the State's Hispanic families (40%) are headed by women. Of these female-headed households, 74% of the Hispanic households and 57% of the Black households are living in poverty.

• Twenty five percent (25%) of Black families and thirty one percent (31%) of Hispanic families in New York State are receiving public assistance benefits.

• The severe loss of blue collar jobs during the 1970's (in which 42% of Black men and 37% of Hispanic men were employed in 1970), combined with the expansion of jobs in white collar service industries in which minorities are least represented and the increased labor force participation of women and the coming of age of the baby boom cohort, to exacerbate the structural unemployment and underemployment of Black and Hispanic men. The situation was further aggravated when national domestic policy makers allowed unemployment to rise in an effort to reduce inflation.

• Many of the industries which do employ large numbers of Blacks and Hispanics frequently fail to offer opportunities for career mobility or advancement; workers may never progress beyond minimum wage and a subsistence level standard of living.

• The federal cutbacks of the 1980's generally reduced or removed income support and supportive services (such as day care) from the working poor. This group was not included in the concept of "the truly needy".

• Enforcement of affirmative action and minority contract compliance guidelines has been undercut by the policies of the current federal administration.

• Existing employment and training programs, especially the Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) programs, appear to "cream" client populations to ensure attainment of performance targets. The direct result of this common practice is that hard to serve populations who are at greatest risk of recurrent or persistent unemployment are not being served by these programs.

• While many JTPA Service Delivery Areas are meeting their goals for serving disadvantaged youth, not all are fulfilling this important obligation.

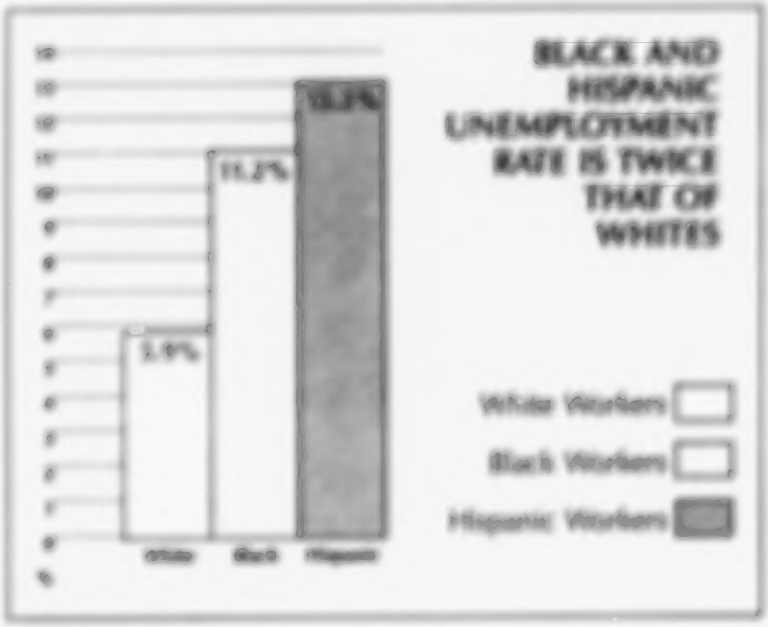
• There is limited knowledge of model employment and training programs which successfully placed men who were out of the labor market for extended periods.

• Because Black and Hispanic youth have considerably higher school drop out and failure rates than their white counterparts, they are under-represented in the math, science and technological fields of study and in college and graduate school programs which equip students for the white collar jobs which offer career advancement and mobility.

• Youth in foster care have not been participating in employment and self-sufficiency programs.

• Blacks and Hispanics have limited access to technical assistance and to capital which is necessary to support the development of small businesses and creation of jobs in inner-city neighborhoods.

• Current efforts to build the capacity of minority community based service organizations are hampered by the impact of increasing match requirements for grant programs, by the need for more timely and effective technical assistance, and by cumbersome application and contract management procedures.



Promoting Economic Self-Sufficiency

RECOMMENDATIONS

Affirmative action and minority contractor compliance guidelines must be enforced, not only to eradicate racism and sexism in employment, but to ensure that policy makers and staff at all levels, in every public and private organization, are representative of the population of New York State. Addressing the unemployment of Blacks and Hispanics must be identified as a priority for New York State.

- Target funds under JTPA to develop effective employment programs for the hard to serve population. JTPA set asides for disadvantaged youth should be extended in accordance with federal regulations. All JTPA Service Delivery Areas should be held accountable for targeting these valuable resources on a priority basis for minority youth.

- Link training programs to comprehensive support systems in which child care, medical care, transportation and counseling are available.

- Develop mentor/role model programs for Black and Hispanic youth entering the job market.

- Promote public/private sector collaboration in inner-city neighborhoods to promote the development of small businesses and encourage their involvement in training and hiring minority youth for careers which provide opportunities for good salaries and career advancement with high school and/or advanced education and training.

- Develop training programs for self-employment through private entrepreneurship as an alternative to continued dependency.

- Reverse current trends toward reduced funding for more intensive training and education programs, particularly in light of widespread concerns about the productivity of the American workforce.

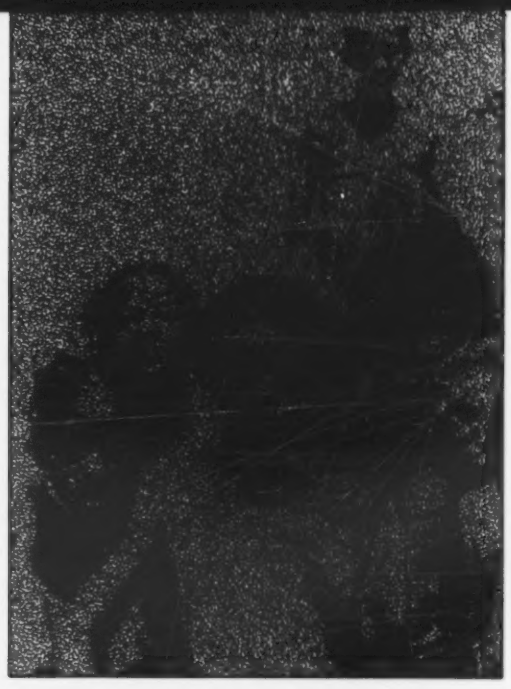
- Government and the private sector must invest resources, including technical assistance, in urban communities to strengthen the capacity of individuals and community-based institutions to develop the resources which will meet their own service needs.

- Grant diversion programs, such as TEAP, should be expanded. Any welfare reform policy should facilitate further experimentation with these strategies for helping welfare recipients to attain economic independence.

- Increase the Earned Income Tax Credit to help poor and near poor parents move out of poverty toward self-sufficiency.

- Compensate for high unemployment with public sector employment opportunities as well as efforts to encourage private sector creation, and location, of new jobs in poor communities.

- Build on the short-term results of the Operation PACE program in which public assistance recipients utilize higher education services to secure college degrees. College graduates earn better wages than those who participate in short-term vocational programs; and are more likely to obtain jobs with better fringe benefits. Job retention is likely to be higher; the likelihood of returning to welfare is lower; and most importantly, ripple effect is likely to occur in these households as children attach greater importance to education.



REVERSING SCHOOL DROP OUT AND FAILURE RATES

Content Expert:
Dr. Kenneth B. Clark

Discussion Leader:
Anthony Alvarado

ISSUES

New York State has the fifth highest drop out rate in the nation (34%). Available data suggests that, for Black and Hispanic students, the drop out rate approaches 60%.

- Public school systems are not being held accountable for the funds they receive or the educational outcomes for their students.

- There is no systematic publication of data by race/ethnicity on student performance in New York State public school systems. School systems measure drop out rates differently.

- Of students who do remain in high school until graduation, many lack basic literacy and math skills. A National Alliance of Business study reports that as many as 40% of high school graduates may be functionally illiterate; and as many as 66% cannot solve math problems which require several steps.

- Although enriched, comprehensive preschool programs, such as Head Start, have been proven effective to promote healthy child growth and development, increased parent involvement in their child's education, and improved school performance in later years, federal funds for these services have been substantially reduced since 1981.

- Increasingly, public school students in New York City are Puerto Rican or foreign born (22% in 1980). The New York City school system is continually receiving large numbers of students who come from a wide variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Many of these students are being raised by parents who also have a limited facility with English.

• In 1980, fifty percent (50%) of the Black, and forty-two percent (42%) of the Hispanic, school age population were being raised by single parents; 61% of Hispanic children and 41% of Black children lived in a household headed by a parent or other adult with less than a high school degree.

• Forty percent (40%) of Black children, and fifty (50%) of Hispanic children lived in poor households in 1980. Ninety percent (90%) of Black and Hispanic children are growing up in neighborhoods in which at least 20% of the residents were poor; and 4 in 10 live in neighborhoods in which at least 40% of the residents were poor. These children are, therefore, attending neighborhood schools in concentrated poverty areas, along with many other children from economically deprived households.

• There is a crisis of faith among some teachers in these schools. Many have come to believe that the children cannot learn; that they won't learn; and that they are not worth teaching. Some students who drop out of public schools do so to protect themselves from the de facto judgment of inferiority. Other children may fulfill the expectations of the disillusioned teachers and administrators who convey their lost faith.

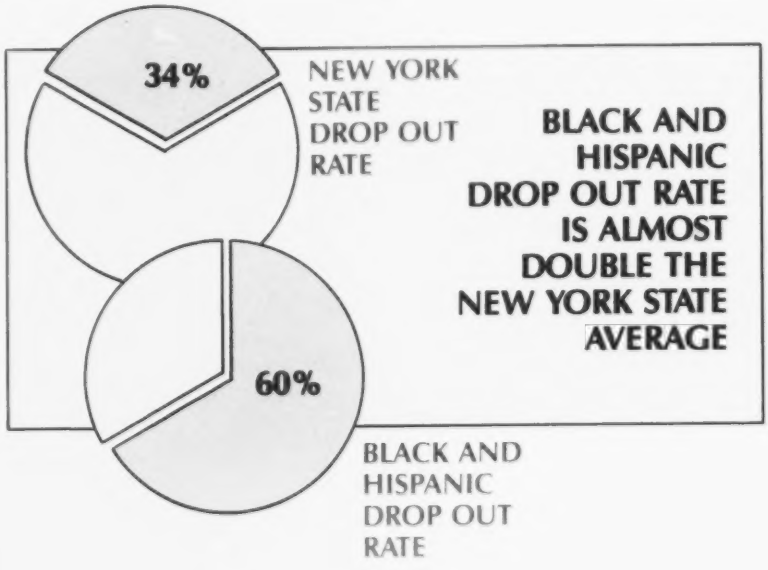
• While it was acknowledged that the quality of teaching in many inner-city schools is poor, it was also recognized that the physical plant and workplace conditions in which inner-city teachers are expected to teach do not support an atmosphere which is conducive to student learning. In addition, the profession of teaching is not revered today as it was a generation ago. There are limited efforts to recruit, rotate, or retain outstanding teachers for inner-city schools by providing incentives and rewarding excellence.

• Counseling and other support services are not available to students when they need them because what counseling is available is oriented to guidance concerning educational programs, or is available on a part-time basis from teaching staff who have other full-time responsibilities.

• Many schools do not see themselves as part of the communities they serve. Some have limited linkages with community-based organizations which could provide services needed by the student population, which the school cannot address.

• Many inner-city schools have no active Parent-Teacher organization, or any other vehicle for parents to actively participate in program planning and evaluation of school curricula and activities.

• Committed teachers and administrators who want to develop innovative programs to improve services for their student population often encounter administrative and financial barriers to developing new or expanded services.


34%
NEW YORK STATE DROP OUT RATE
BLACK AND HISPANIC DROP OUT RATE IS ALMOST DOUBLE THE NEW YORK STATE AVERAGE
60%
BLACK AND HISPANIC DROP OUT RATE

Reversing School Drop Out and Failure Rates

RECOMMENDATIONS

End the crisis in faith in the schools. Adopt the principle that no child is expendable, and all children can learn.

- Create community schools in high need neighborhoods which would provide comprehensive services for children and adults via school and community-based organizations and partnerships with businesses.

- New York State should set a five year goal of reducing the school drop out rates for Black and Hispanic students by 50%, and hold the schools accountable for results.

- The State Education Department should develop systematic data collection practices and produce regular reports on student performance, drop out rates, attendance rates, types of diplomas awarded, and any other key measures of student progress.

- Expand Head-Start type pre-school programs for all 4 year olds in New York State—beginning with the children in high need communities.

- Promote child-development focus in all publicly funded day care.

- Direct resources to the schools with the greatest need, and insist upon accountability for the use of public funds.

- Schools should provide full-time counseling supports for students, or develop linkage arrangements with service organizations in the catchment area to ensure that services are available to youth who have family problems or other service needs. Information should be readily available to youth about programs and services on and off the school site.

• Reconsider the centralization of school administration at the district level versus the school building level. Create flexibility for principals and teaching staff to create the teaching and other services needed by the student population.

• Provide incentives in the educational system which will help to attract and retain excellent teachers and administrators. Promote recruitment of Black and Hispanic staff for jobs at all levels of the educational system.

• Attendance rules should be enforced, and parents should be notified when students are not in school. Schools should establish plans for dealing with truancy.

• Explore school/business partnerships to improve school performance and improve the productivity of the workforce of tomorrow. Pilot test the development of model employment centers in the high schools—replicating the Job Services exchange function within school walls.

• Adopt the following principles: start early; hold high expectations for children and their parents; foster supportive environments which encourage learning; monitor the progress of students; try innovative programs; promote school-to-work and education-to-citizenship links for students; and educate adults in the community who have already dropped out.

ASSURING QUALITY HEALTH CARE

Content Expert:
Dr. Linda Randolph

Discussion Leader:
Dr. Martin Begun

ISSUES

Access to quality health care is affected by geographic location of services, by hours of service, by language and cultural barriers to communication between practitioners and consumers, and by inability to pay. It is estimated that, in 1985, nearly 300,000 children in New York State had no health coverage. Black and Hispanic families are two to three times more likely than white families to be uninsured.

- Black and Hispanic children are significantly more vulnerable to infant mortality, neo-natal infant mortality (death occurring in the first 28 days of life), and post-neonatal infant mortality (death occurring between 28 days and the first year of life) than white children. Among homeless families in New York City's welfare hotels, the mortality rate for infants was 25/1000, almost ten times the infant mortality rate for white children (2.9/1000), and four times the infant mortality rate for the non-white population of New York State in 1983 (6.3/1000).

- Black infants are more than twice as likely as white infants to be born with low-birth weights; and non-white women in New York State are much more likely to receive late or no prenatal care during pregnancy. In certain health districts in New York City, over 50% of women giving birth had late or no prenatal care.

- Studies estimate that more than half of the nation's poor and minority children are not fully vaccinated against preventable childhood diseases. Hispanic children appear to be especially vulnerable to iron deficiency anemia; and Black children appear to be exposed much more frequently to agents which cause elevated blood lead levels. In one national study, the proportion of Black preschool children with elevated blood lead levels was six times higher than for white children. Elevated blood lead levels are strongly linked to developmental impairments.

- Blacks and Hispanics are severely underrepresented among practitioners of all major health disciplines, including research and allied health personnel. The proportion of Blacks and Hispanics graduating from medical, dental or pharmacy schools, does not come near their proportion in the general population.

- In 1984, 38% of all New York State's adolescent pregnancies were to Black teenagers.

- Black and Hispanic children make up over 90% of the pediatric AIDS cases in New York State. It is expected that the number of children with AIDS will continue to grow.

- Black and Hispanic youth have disproportionate rates of deaths caused by homicide. In 1982, the homicide rate for Black teenagers was four times higher than for white teenagers.

- Alcohol and substance abuse continue to be major problems for Black and Hispanic youth, although Black youth drink less heavily than white youth.

- Of secondary school students who reported using drugs in a 1983 study in New York, 10% of Blacks and 15% of Hispanics reported that they had recently used cocaine. Since 1983, the "crack" epidemic exploded onto the scene and cocaine use levels are expected to be higher. Heroin addiction continues to impact most heavily on Black and Hispanic youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognize that every child and family is entitled to the provision of quality, culturally sensitive, accessible, age appropriate health care. It is a critical service for any low-income family whose head of household is attempting to enter or re-enter the work force.

- Provide health services and health education for at-risk children, including children with disabilities and special needs, where they are—in homeless shelters, on the street, at home, in day care programs, in school or preschool, at youth centers, in churches, at community clubs or in foster care programs.

- Provide maternal and newborn services for all pregnant women in New York State living in households with incomes below 185% of poverty. Emphasis must be continued on adolescent pregnancy issues.

- Expand the WIC program from 45% of eligibles to 100% of eligibles by 1990.

- Expand Medicaid eligibility to cover the working poor.

- Implement the concept of holistic, service-integrated centers for families where medical services are part of an empowerment, prevention-oriented service system.

- Mandate appropriate levels of recruitment and retention of Blacks and Hispanics into medical and allied health professional or occupational schools.

ADDRESSING THE CRISIS OF BLACK AND HISPANIC CHILDREN IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

Content Expert:
Dr. Mary Funnye Goldson

Discussion Leader:
Assemblyman Al Vann

ISSUES

Black and Hispanic children are over-represented in the client population requiring the full range of child welfare services: preventive services, foster care services and adoption services.

- Funding for family and children's services is still generally skewed to favor remedial rather than preventive family support services.

- The public social services agencies and the voluntary agencies with whom they contract have a limited capacity to conduct outreach to the Black and Hispanic community to find suitable foster and adoptive homes.

- Staffing at all levels within the public and voluntary child welfare agencies does not reflect the Black and Hispanic population of New York State. The lack of bilingual/bicultural staff to address the needs of Hispanic families with children is identified as an issue with critical service implications.

- Excessively high caseload sizes and limited staff development opportunities are viewed as factors in the high turnover rates of child welfare staff.

- Lack of consistent input from Black and Hispanic professionals into the development of policy and program initiatives with impact on Black and Hispanic children is also identified as a critical service issue. Few Black and Hispanic agencies have been in a position to take a leadership role on behalf of their own children.

- Many families who seek foster placements for their children do so because they cannot find adequate housing; other families who would become foster parents are unable to do so because their homes lack adequate space to allow them to accept another child. Another critical impact of the housing shortage is that youth who age out of foster care are moving into homeless shelters, rather than independent living arrangements.

• Increasingly the foster care population is made up of older children with serious emotional and behavioral problems, teenage parents and their infant children, and younger children born to drug-addicted parents, including children born HIV positive or with AIDS.

• Independent living goals have been insufficiently addressed for adolescents in the child welfare system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

New York State should expand efforts to develop minority child welfare agencies. Continue to provide financial support, technical assistance and training until these programs become viable as independent agencies.

• Develop community-based coalitions or authorities to facilitate the provision of a full range of child welfare services, including family support services to create alternatives to foster care placements and to recruit foster homes in their geographic areas when placement is necessary. The authorities must reflect the racial and cultural composition of the community.

• Employ Black and Hispanic professionals in managerial and public policy positions in all parts of the child welfare system, including state and local government and not-for-profit agencies responsible for delivery of family and children's services.

• Resist the return to group care for infants and young children. (This would not preclude the development of transitional facilities for children with AIDS).

• Upgrade the salaries of child welfare workers to enhance the likelihood of attracting and maintaining competent staff. Strengthen staff development efforts and include training for caseworkers to enhance their ability to work with diverse cultural and ethnic groups. Develop stipends for staff development purposes to encourage minority social workers to remain in the public social services system.

• Establish state statutory authority regarding maximum caseload size.

• Ensure that bilingual/bicultural staff are available to provide services to non-English speaking clients in their primary language. Policies must be established which prohibit the use of children as interpreters and translators.

• Expand efforts to address independent living needs, including housing and employment, of adolescents in the foster care system.

DEVELOPING AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND PROMOTING NEIGHBORHOOD RENEWAL

Content Expert:
Victor Marrero

Discussion Leader:
Herman Badillo

ISSUES

The critical shortage of low-income housing in New York State has been getting worse as the number of families living in poverty has grown and the demand for safe, decent affordable housing has increased. The housing that is available to poor families is frequently substandard and overcrowded.

- *Without adequate housing, many families drift from place to place, doubling and tripling up with relatives and, when all else fails, resorting to homeless shelters and welfare hotels. In New York City alone, there are 100,000 families with 200,000 children whose lives are marked by overcrowding, disruption, excessive stress and frequent violence.*

- *The shortage of adequate, affordable housing falls disproportionately on impoverished families, especially Black and Hispanic mothers with children.*

- *Historically, federally funded housing programs have been available to address the need for low-income housing, but the current administration has cut back housing programs dramatically, and State and City efforts to fill the gap have been unable to meet the demand for low-income housing. The housing gap in New York City exceeds 600,000 units.*

- *The Tax Reform Act of 1986 is expected to further exacerbate the housing market by eliminating incentives for investors to develop low-income housing.*

- *Abandonment and conversion of low-income housing are real threats to the existing housing stock. Housing starts are also declining in New York City: almost no multi-family, low-income units are being built in New York City—only 400 new units since 1981, as compared to 12,093 new public housing units in 1977.*

• Rents have increased, while public assistance and real income has decreased. The costs of operating and maintaining housing exceeds the rents which low income families can afford to pay. Deterioration and abandonment is the result.

• Bring the federal government back into the low-income housing business. Federal tax laws must be changed to stimulate low income housing production.

• Following the lead of San Francisco and other jurisdictions, local governments in New York should explore ways of linking the development of commercial and luxury residential real estate to the provision of low-income housing. Efforts developed in New York City, such as using Battery Park City revenues to create low-income housing and the inclusionary Housing Program adopted by the City Planning Commission, are steps in this direction, and should be expanded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Create housing opportunity zones throughout New York State under the sponsorship of the State Urban Development Corporation. UDC would set aside entire neighborhoods for renewal, and would bypass local impediments to renewal; provide for rehabilitation of existing housing for low and moderate income families within the zone; and would provide for new construction of mixed low-rise and Nehemiah-type, one family housing for low and moderate homeless families.

• Develop State housing rental subsidies for low-income persons, and increase welfare shelter allowances with indexation for inflation in housing costs.

• Give priority for vacant units in all state assisted housing programs to homeless and low-income families.

• Prevent the reversions of Mitchell-Lama housing, which has now threatened to go into market rentals, by extending provision of the existing law.

STOPPING THE CYCLE OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

ISSUES

Black and Hispanic children are over-represented among reported victims of child abuse and neglect, and among children in the foster care system. Comparable data does not exist for domestic violence; however, studies have documented a high correlation between incidences of child abuse and domestic violence, and that the frequency and intensity of all forms of family violence increase in families subjected to the stresses of unemployment, poverty and youthful head of household.

• There are limited community-based supports for families which could act to reduce stresses and intervene earlier to reduce both the incidence of abuse and the need for residential placements to escape family violence.

• Current staffing of social services, health, education, mental health and law enforcement agencies – which play a role in prevention as well as treatment – is not representative of the Black and Hispanic communities they serve. Thus, there is widespread misunderstanding of social and cultural differences between workers and clients – which takes its most extreme form when caseworkers investigating child abuse and neglect (who have the authority to remove children from their homes to ensure their safety) are unable to communicate with a parent or parents who are Spanish-dominant.

• Prevention, investigation and treatment workers, across all systems, lack a common understanding of family violence and their responsibilities within that common framework.

• Insufficient resources are available to provide emergency shelter and non-residential services for victims of domestic violence and their children.

Content Expert
Miguelina Maldonado

Discussion Leader
Dr. Patricia Mahony

• Staffing of domestic violence programs is unrepresentative of the Black and Hispanic population of New York State. Few programs have bilingual/bicultural staff available to meet the needs of Hispanic clients who are not English-dominant.

• There is no funding to establish and maintain treatment programs for batterers. There is limited enforcement of existing law which requires police officers to inform domestic violence victims of their rights and inform them of services in their community.

• Child Protective Service workers tend to be inexperienced, overworked and inadequately supervised. Caseload sizes far exceed standards recommended by the Child Welfare League of America.

RECOMMENDATIONS

All family violence services, public and private, must be culturally sensitive and inclusive of Black and Hispanic perspectives in policy, program development and staffing.

• Policy makers must develop common understandings of family violence across all public service systems, including the criminal justice system. Provide training for all human services and criminal justice providers in family violence issues and in cultural differences in working with families of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

• Ensure ongoing financial support to establish and maintain a full range of residential and non-residential domestic violence services, including:
  - primary and secondary prevention (school programs)
  - community outreach and education
  - advocacy
  - services for battered partners and their children (counseling, shelter, day care)
  - treatment for batterers, including family court and criminal court mandated programs.

• Improve the Child Protective Services system by upgrading investigation and social services to families, by increasing salaries and job qualifications, improving working conditions, upgrading supervisory staff and establishing maximum caseload sizes. Strengthen efforts to recruit and retain Black and Hispanic staff to provide direct services to families and children. Ensure that bilingual/bicultural staff are available to provide services to non-English speaking clients in their primary language.

• Promote the creation and expansion of Black and Hispanic community-based organizations involved in the provision of family support and family violence services by enhancing technical assistance and training in program development as well as administration, and by correcting the crisis created by increasing match requirements for demonstration projects.

Summary of Recommendations

We have reached a point in the history of New York State, indeed, in the history of the nation, in which the combined effects of the deterioration of the housing stock, the educational system, family supports and the economic base of the inner cities are placing our economic future in serious jeopardy. University of Chicago's Dr. William Julius Wilson's analysis of the impact of concentrated poverty within high need neighborhoods, and its disproportionate effect on Black and Hispanic children has been widely accepted.

The primary recommendation of the Summit on Black and Hispanic Children is that New York State should make a 10 year commitment to develop services and re-build the infrastructure of the inner-city communities of New York State which have the greatest need.

Summit participants urged the development of a 10 year action plan in which public, private and voluntary sectors, at both the state and local levels, coordinate their activities and resources to reflect the following principles and commitments:

- that no Black or Latino child is expendable; that no school, neighborhood or community is beyond restoration.
- that families, neighborhoods and community-based institutions and service agencies are the primary vehicles for support and nurturance of children.
- that new and existing funding streams are targeted to the areas of greatest need.
- that accountability for results is emphasized for all education and human service programs.
- that health care and day care services are critical components of any effort to assist low income parents to enter (or re-enter) the labor market.
- that low- and moderate-income housing renovation and construction in inner-city neighborhoods is a priority for New York State.
- that public/private sector initiatives are essential to promote economic self-sufficiency of Black and Hispanic families in inner-city neighborhoods.
- that Blacks and Hispanics who moved out of the inner-city communities must "give something back" to the neighborhoods they left behind.
- that affirmative action and minority contractor compliance guidelines are enforced, not only to eradicate the effects of racism and sexism in employment, but to ensure that policy makers and staff—at all levels—are representative of the population of New York State.
- that government and the private sector will invest resources, including technical assistance, in inner-city communities to strengthen the capacity of families and community-based institutions to address their own needs.

In addition to these principles, the Summit participants called for some immediate and specific actions, including: a 50% reduction of drop out rates over the next five years; development of community schools; provision of health care to poor children whose families lack health insurance; reduction in the fragmentation of service delivery; expansion of Head Start and other child development focussed day care programs for low income children; development of housing opportunity zones; development of specialized education, training and employment programs—including entrepreneurial programs—to assist low income men and women to achieve self-sufficiency; reduction of caseload sizes and an upgrading of social services staff who serve children and families; and the development of policies to ensure the availability of bi-lingual/bicultural staff so that children are never used as interpreters when family service workers are communicating with adults in a household.

The Summit participants urged the establishment or expansion of efforts to develop minority community-based agencies as service providers in high need areas of the State. They also urged the State to develop Request for Proposals and contracts procedures which do not create barriers to participation by grass roots agencies. They recommended the establishment of Child Welfare Authorities at the community level to ensure the participation of Blacks and Hispanics in the development of service plans, and the provision of foster care alternatives, for children at risk. Finally, Summit participants called for adequate funding of domestic violence programs and mandatory treatment of batterers, as well as training for staff across all service systems who deal with victims of domestic violence and their children

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